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ABSTRACT

This book, in response to recent attacks on principles of affirmative action for minorities, suggests that need-based affirmative action cannot substitute for programs based on race and gender. It proposes a theory of affirmative action based on the contention that affirmative action has three morally defensible goals: (1) correction of systematic and long-standing ruptures of the principle of equal opportunity; (2) advancement of the standing of people who have been discriminated against because of ascribed characteristics such as gender or skin color; and (3) meeting an historical obligation. The five chapters cover such topics as the background and need for a theory of affirmative action; markets, educational selection, poverty, and affirmative action; the case for backward-looking gender- and race-based policy rather than need-based affirmative action; group rights and historical obligations; and need, diversity, and group variation. (DB)

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